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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2210

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GLOBAL WARMING

Ms. Cynthia L. Quarterman
Administrator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
East Building, 2nd Floor
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Washington, DC 20590

Administrator Quarterman:

The July 26 rupture of Enbridge Energy's Line 6B pipeline near Marshall, Michigan is a disaster of great concern to all Michigan residents. The approximately one million gallons of crude oil that was spilled into the Kalamazoo River will no doubt affect aquatic and nearby plant life for years to come. Fortunately, a prompt response to the incident seems to have stopped the flow of oil down the Kalamazoo River, ensuring it will not reach Lake Michigan.

Michigan is known as the Great Lakes State, and Michiganders consider themselves defenders of this national treasure. Four of the five Great Lakes touch Michigan shores, and the Lakes themselves represent twenty percent – fully one-fifth – of the world's freshwater drinking supply. Michigan's elected officials in both parties have worked hard to preserve these bodies of water and have worked to protect them from a variety of threats including water diversion, invasive species, and the impact of oil and chemical spills.

As the representative of Michigan's 10th Congressional District, which runs along Lake Huron, the St. Clair River, and Lake St. Clair, I have been an advocate for reducing water pollution into our Great Lakes. I have been particularly wary of spills emanating from "Chemical Valley," in Sarnia, Ontario, which is one of the largest collections of petrochemical facilities in North America. Several years ago, I worked to establish a real time monitoring system in the St. Clair River to detect spills from Chemical Valley to ensure they did not contaminate the drinking water supply for million of residents in southeast Michigan.

I was not surprised to learn that the Line 6B pipeline, which was the source of the July 26 spill, terminates in Chemical Valley. In fact, there are dozens of pipelines that run through St. Clair County, MI, before undercutting the St. Clair River and ending in

Sarnia. However, I am troubled by what I have learned in recent days regarding the Line 6B pipeline.

In June 2009, Enbridge's own assessment of Line 6B discovered over 200 anomalies between mileposts 650 and 753. These sections of the pipeline are closer in proximity to the Great Lakes than the spill that occurred at milepost 608 on July 26. While Enbridge did reduce the maximum pressure of the pipeline to accommodate these anomalies, they have yet to make the necessary repairs. In fact, just a few weeks ago on July 15, Enbridge requested the ability to operate at the reduced pressure for an additional 2 ½ years.

Given the recent rupture of Line 6B at milepost 608 and the troubling anomalies between mileposts 650 and 753, I would request that your Administration thoroughly inspect Line 6B particularly in the areas near the St. Clair River. While we were fortunate the spill of July 26 did not reach the Great Lakes, we would likely not be so fortunate should the pipeline rupture in St. Clair County or under the St. Clair River. The events in the Gulf of Mexico have demonstrated how quickly devastation can occur if we are not proactive in preventing spills in the first place.

Additionally, I would urge you to share the information from this inspection with state and local emergency officials. Awareness of the risk associated with the pipeline will assist these responders in managing their assets so they can quickly and appropriately respond to an incident. I also believe a review of emergency notification protocols is necessary to ensure that all available resources can be brought to bear on a potential spill.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I look forward to working with you to ensure that our nation's pipelines are operated in a safe and environmentally friendly way.

Sincerely,



Candice S. Miller
Member of Congress